

produce the end, except in so far as they may be crossed by other agencies. All this is done in order that we may put trust in nature, in order that sight itself may induce us to cherish faith, and that we may see the interposition of God more impressively, when the end is not produced. In the spiritual providence of God, on the other hand, the mean has no inherent power to produce the end, and thus the Christian is prevented from trusting in it, and made to look more devotedly to God as the true and alone source of all spiritual excellence. It is the manner of God in all his works to accomplish the same end by more than one means, and we may discover the Divine wisdom in the very variation of the agency to suit the circumstances.

(3.) We do not perceive the agent, who changes the character, at work; but we conclude that he has been working by discovering the effects produced. It is for this reason, among others, that he is compared to the wind. "Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The silent nature of the Spirit's operations has sometimes made his agency to be denied altogether, by those who are ever demanding some sensible evidence of the truth communicated in the Word. But those who urge this objection, forget that many of the most powerful of the agents of nature are themselves unseen, and are only to be discovered by their fruits. We do not, for instance, see the wind, whether it comes in the gentle breeze to fan us, or in the hurricane to work such devastation among the labours of man and the very works of God. The heat that nourishes the plants of the earth, and the electricity so intimately connected with all atmospherical and organic changes, move secretly and in silence. These individuals forget that God is always himself unseen in the midst of his works. When we walk forth in the

silence of eventide to meditate, we are
constrained to acknow-
ledge that God is everywhere present among
these works of
grandeur; and yet, by intense gaze, we cannot
discover his
person, nor, by patient listening, hear the sound of
his footsteps,
No jarring sound of mechanism comes across the
void that inter-
venes between us and these heavens—no voice of
boasting readies
our ears to tell of the worker; it is the heavens
themselves that
declare his glory. And why should the God who
created us
not be able to renew the heart when it is debased
by the effects